

Testimony from John Souza of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO)  
Before the Housing Committee 2/23/2023

Good afternoon esteemed members of the Housing Committee. My name is John Souza and I volunteer as President of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners and I'm a full-time landlord. The Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO) is one of Connecticut's largest landlord/property owner organizations. CCOPO has affiliates in Enfield, Windham, Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New Britain and Stamford, as well as the CT Association of Real Estate Investors (CAREI) in West Hartford. Our members own thousands of rental units throughout Connecticut, consisting of mostly small and medium sized landlords.

For over 20 years CCOPO has been a constructive voice for responsible landlords on such issues as: nuisance abatement, bedbugs, domestic violence and many others. We are here to represent the responsible small to midsize property providers, and most members are local residents of the towns they serve. These small business people often have other jobs as well as operating their property part time nights and weekends. We often know our tenants by their first names and value the relationship that benefits us both.

**OPPOSE H.B. No. 6666 AN ACT EXPANDING RENTERS' RIGHTS.**

This bill lowers the maximum-security deposit a housing provider can request from a tenant to 1 month of rent. The unintended consequences will hurt many tenants struggling to find an apartment.

- It will hurt marginal applicants, with poor credit, low income, or a prior eviction the most. As the risk to benefit ratio becomes too great when only 1 month's security is collected and they will get turned down for rentals more often, making their life more difficult.
- Property owners' risk \$5,000 to \$10,000 minimum when they rent to anyone. The more security (like up to 3 months) they can collect the lower the risk they have of losing money and thus increasing the likelihood they will rent to an individual with damaged rental history, poor credit or a criminal conviction
- If tenants have "skin in the game" they are more likely to take good care of the apartment unit and follow the rules including leaving everything clean and undamaged when moving out.
- It forces housing providers to raise credit scores and other metrics required to move in which results in more applicants being unqualified.
- It will increase the likelihood a tenant will have bruised credit scores when they often don't pay the last month's rent because they need the money to move and now would have nothing left of a security deposit to cover minor repairs or cleaning. As a result, Housing providers will report monies due to the credit bureaus.
- Increasing the States guaranteed security deposit) fund program (not lowering the amount as HB 6708 does) to 2 to 3 months of security instead of 1 month would go a long way to helping tenants find the rental home they desire.

**Oppose HB No. 6708 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECURITY DEPOSIT GUARANTEE PROGRAM** This Bill would lower the amount a tenant could request for a state provided Security deposit. When in fact what is needed is higher security deposits limits. This would mitigate a great amount of risk and help tenants secure higher quality Housing in better locations. Please do not reduce the amount a renter can get to help secure quality housing.

**Support:**

Support S.B. No. 1045 (RAISED) AN ACT ELIMINATING THE REQUIREMENT TO STORE THE PERSONAL PROPERTY OF EVICTED TENANTS.

Expensive for us and the towns, tenants should be responsible for themselves. Often Landlords and towns are paying to move and store unwanted or broken furniture and belongings that the tenant doesn't want and has abandoned. Make the moving services and storage of belongings only available by request of the tenant. This will remove a large amount of time and expense for the Property owners and the towns.

**Support** H.B. No. 6706 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

This Bill makes State rental assistance programs more flexible, with faster payment and inspection schedules. This is good for tenants and housing providers because we don't automatically lose a month's rent at turnover when a subsidized tenant applies for apartment. This would take away a major hurdle for subsidized tenants allowing them to better compete for available housing stock on the market. A WIN / WIN!

**Support** S.B. No. 1050 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING TASK FORCES TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF EVICTIONS ON LANDLORDS AND RENT STABILIZATION POLICIES.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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